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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/552,444	10/03/2006	Juha Orta	019075-00071	2285
4372	7590	09/10/2010		
ARENT FOX LLP 1050 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 400 WASHINGTON, DC 20036			EXAMINER MILLIGAN, ADAM C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1612	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			09/10/2010 ELECTRONIC	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

DCIPDocket@arentfox.com
IPMatters@arentfox.com
Patent_Mail@arentfox.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/552,444

Applicant(s)

ORTE ET AL.

Examiner

ADAM MILLIGAN

Art Unit

1612

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 March 2010.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 17-29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/22)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' arguments, filed 3/29/2010, have been fully considered. Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous Office Actions are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objections are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set presently being applied to the instant application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schul et al. (WO 01/72136, published 10/4/2001, see IDS dated 10/7/2005), in view of Bonakdar et al. (PG Pub. 2002/0082434, published 6/27/2002, see IDS dated 10/7/2005).

First, Applicants argue that while Schul may broadly disclose reacting a lower alkyl fatty acid ester, Schul does not specifically teach reacting fatty acid esters of glycerol (i.e. fatty acid glycerides). Applicants note that specific embodiments of Schul teach using methyl fatty acid ester (Schul at Examples 1 and 2), which fatty acid esters are required to be produced separately or commercially purchased, rather than using fatty acid glycerides directly as instantly claimed.

Second, Applicants assert that the present application contains unexpected results, which involves a step of combining the sterol composition, a fatty acid glyceride composition, and an etherification catalyst. Applicants submit that Bonakdar does not fulfill the deficiencies of Schul because Bonakdar, like Schul, fails to teach or suggest these unexpected results.

Examiner disagrees. First, while the specific embodiments described in Examples 1 and 2 of the prior art do in fact use methyl fatty acid esters, the broader disclosure of Schul teaches reacting a sterol with a tryglyceride (Schul at p.6, lines 20-31), which is a glycerol fatty acid ester of one or more fatty acids.

Second, while Applicants make a case for unexpected results, it is unclear what data Applicants are interpreting as unexpected. Applicants state that the "excess of fatty acid esters enables optimal conversion levels in the etherification of sterols", results in a "simple, efficient, and cost effective food grade process", but provide no data to establish this claim. As explained in that the Office Action dated 9/28/2009, which is herein incorporated by reference, Bonakdar taught that in order to increase the product yield, part of the mother liquor, which includes the fatty acid alkyl (i.e. glycerol) ester is recycled back into the esterification step (Bonakdar at ¶ 35), which corresponds to the recycling step recited by claim 6. Based on this teaching of Bonakdar, it would have been obvious to the skilled artisan to recycle the fatty acid esters and reuse them in a subsequent esterification process in order to increase the product yield. Thus, the increase in product yield is not an unexpected property in light of the prior art.

Conclusion

No claims allowed.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ADAM MILLIGAN whose telephone number is (571)270-7674. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00-5:00 EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fred Krass can be reached on (571)272-0580. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Frederick Krass/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1612

/ADAM MILLIGAN/
Examiner, Art Unit 1612